



June 16, 2005

Former Providence mayor, two codefendants are resentenced in Operation Plunder Dome corruption probe

Chief U.S. District Court Judge Ernest C. Torres today resentenced **Vincent A. Cianci, Jr.** to 64 months in federal prison for a racketeering conspiracy that Cianci ran as Mayor of Providence. It is the same sentence that Judge Torres imposed on Cianci in September 2002 after a four-year federal investigation, known as **Operation Plunder Dome**, uncovered a pattern of corruption in the Cianci administration.

United States Attorney Robert Clark Corrente announced the sentence, which Judge Torres imposed in U.S. District Court, Providence. In April, the First Circuit Court of Appeals remanded the Cianci case for resentencing because of a U.S. Supreme Court decision in January that affected the guidelines under which Cianci and two codefendants had been sentenced.

In separate hearings yesterday, Chief Judge Torres also resentenced Cianci's codefendants: tow-truck operator **Richard A. Autiello** to 46 months in prison, the same sentence imposed in 2002; and Cianci's former chief of staff, **Frank A. Corrente**, to 56 months in prison, seven months less than the 63-month sentence imposed in 2002.

In lowering Corrente's sentence, Judge Torres cited his age, 78, as a factor, which he could not fully take into consideration in 2002, when the federal sentencing guidelines were viewed as mandatory. Cianci is 64 and Autiello is 66.

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Judge Torres reimposed the same fines on all three defendants, fining Cianci \$100,000, Corrente \$75,000, and Autiello \$50,000, noting that the fines had already been paid. And he reaffirmed a 2002 order that Cianci's campaign election fund, Friends of Cianci, forfeit to the government \$250,000 that was linked to a tow truck bribery scheme.

Cianci, Corrente, and Autiello were found guilty in June 2002 of conspiring to violate the Racketeer Influenced Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO) by using Providence city government for criminal activity that included extortion and bribery. During a two-month trial, Assistant U.S. Attorneys Richard W. Rose and Terrence P. Donnelly presented evidence that Cianci led a criminal enterprise that permeated several departments of city government. The evidence showed that the criminal enterprise used City Hall to obtain illicit payments – often in the guise of campaign contributions – in return for leases, contracts, employment, or other benefits.

In addition to the RICO conspiracy, the jury also found **Corrente** guilty of a substantive RICO offense that involved participating directly in racketeering acts, conspiracy to commit federal bribery, and conspiracy to commit extortion. The evidence showed that tow truck operators had to pay bribes, euphemistically styled as “campaign contributions,” to remain on the city's tow list. The evidence also showed that Corrente extorted cash payments from a city contractor to expedite payment of invoices and to help him secure a city lease. The contractor was, in fact, a cooperating witness working with the FBI in Operation Plunder Dome.

Autiello was also found guilty of engaging in two federal bribery conspiracies, one for soliciting the tow list payments to the campaign and the other for funneling a bribe to secure a police department job an applicant.

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In August 2004, the First Circuit affirmed the convictions of Cianci, Corrente, and Autiello. However, it left unanswered questions about their sentences because the Supreme Court had recently issued a decision that cast into doubt the validity of the mandatory federal sentencing guidelines. In January the Supreme Court ruled, in U.S. v. Booker, that the guidelines are advisory rather than mandatory, causing the Circuit Court to remand the case for resentencing.

Six other defendants – two lawyers and four city officials – pleaded guilty to or were convicted of various corruption offenses as a result of Operation Plunder Dome, which began in 1998.

The **Federal Bureau of Investigation** directed the Operation Plunder Dome investigation. The **Rhode Island State Police** and the **Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigations Division** participated in the investigation. FBI Special Agent W. Dennis Aiken was the lead investigator. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Rose and Donnelly prosecuted the cases, Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael P. Iannotti prosecuted the asset forfeiture and Assistant U.S. Attorney Donald C. Lockhart handled the appeal for the government at the First Circuit.